

# Imagine

a world...



...where our mothers, daughters,  
and sisters all have access  
to health care and the wisdom  
needed to stay healthy and strong.

**2006**

**WISEWOMAN™**

Well-integrated Screening and Evaluation  
for Women Across the Nation





**M**illions of middle-aged and older women in America are uninsured, cut off from health services that could save their lives and prevent costly, debilitating illnesses down the road.

### About WISEWOMAN

CDC funds 15 WISEWOMAN projects. Their main goal is to prevent heart disease among women aged 40–64 who have little or no health insurance. All WISEWOMAN projects provide women with blood pressure and cholesterol screenings. Some projects also offer tests for diabetes and osteoporosis. Women are not just screened and referred. They can also take advantage of lifestyle programs that target poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and smoking, such as healthy cooking classes, fitness competitions, or quit-smoking courses. The interventions may vary from project to project, but all are designed to promote lasting, healthy changes.

### Here's a solution

In a decade, CDC-funded WISEWOMAN projects have reached thousands of low-income women across America, giving them the opportunity to reduce their risk for heart disease, diabetes, and other serious health problems. Nearly 74% of these women are overweight or obese, and 27% of them smoke. One-third are from racial and ethnic minority populations. Because WISEWOMAN piggybacks onto the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, it offers low-income women **one-stop shopping** so they can be screened for breast and cervical cancer, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and other problems that are all-too-common and yet often preventable and treatable. WISEWOMAN also gives these vulnerable women the knowledge and tools they need to make physical activity and good nutrition a regular part of their lives. Such changes can have lasting effects on their health.

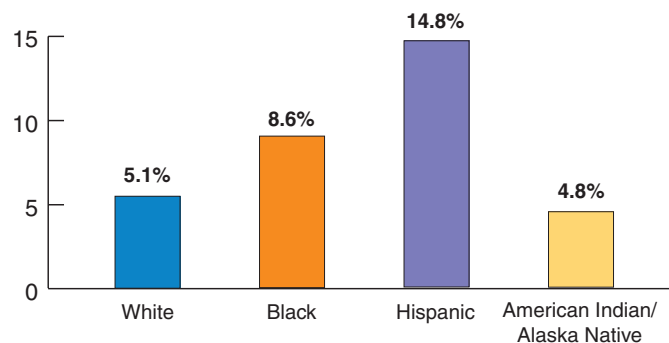
### WISEWOMAN works because...

- It reaches women who don't have health insurance.
- It is making a real difference in the lives of American women who are usually left behind.
- WISEWOMAN reduces the estimated chances that these women will die of heart disease, the leading cause of death for women.
- It advances our nation's health goals with interventions that show promising results.
- It pools the resources of traditional and nontraditional partners.
- The program has grown dramatically during the past 10 years, reaching thousands more women each year.

## And here's proof WISEWOMAN works

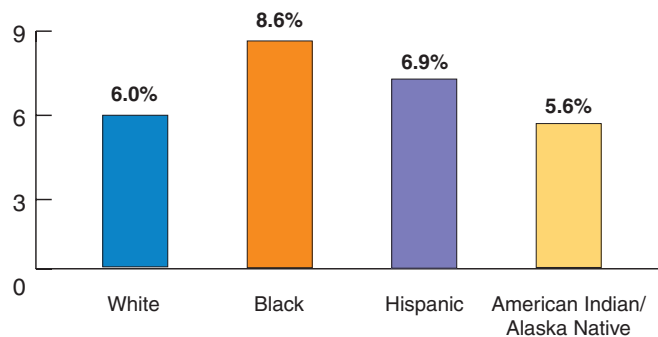
- Women in the WISEWOMAN program have maintained their weight for 1 year, countering the trend of weight gain that is particularly pronounced in low-income populations.
- Their blood pressure has come down (both systolic and diastolic levels have declined).
- Their cholesterol levels have declined.
- 6% of smokers have quit.
- Their estimated risk for dying of heart disease has declined significantly.
- They are more likely to return for regular mammograms.

### Reduction in Smoking Rates Among WISEWOMAN Participants at 1-Year Follow-Up\*



Source: Research Triangle Institute, Minimum Data Element Database, 2000 through June 2004.  
\* Of the women who smoked when they entered the program, the percentage who had quit at 1-year follow-up.

### Reduction in WISEWOMAN Participants' Estimated Risk for Death Within the Next 5 Years from Heart Disease or Stroke† at 1-Year Follow-Up



Source: Research Triangle Institute, Minimum Data Element Database, 2000 through June 2004.

† Jackson's scoring sheet was used to estimate the risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD) death within the next 5 years. This sheet calculates the 5-year probability of developing CVD, which is defined as coronary heart disease as well as stroke, peripheral vascular disease, and heart failure. (Jackson R. Updated New Zealand cardiovascular disease risk-benefit prediction guide. *BMJ* 2000;320:709-10.)



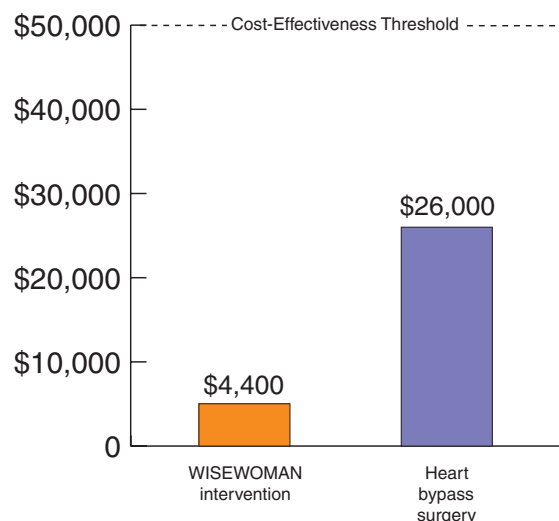
# A woman's health should not depend on...

## WISEWOMAN is a wise investment

Health economists generally agree that if an intervention can save 1 year of life for less than \$50,000, it is cost-effective. Bypass surgery is a good example. It costs \$26,000 per year of life saved and thus is considered cost-effective. So in economic terms, the WISEWOMAN

program is a real bargain, with costs falling far below the \$50,000 threshold. The WISEWOMAN program found that its interventions have extended women's lives at a cost of \$4,400 per estimated year of life saved.

Cost Per Estimated Year of Life Saved



Source: Finkelstein EO, Khavjou O, Will J. Cost-effectiveness of WISEWOMAN, a program aimed at reducing heart disease risk among low-income women. In press, Journal of Women's Health, 2006.





...where she lives,  
her status in life, or  
the color of her skin.

## **One-stop shopping with benefits that could last a lifetime**

Together, WISEWOMAN and the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program provide Pap tests, clinical breast exams, and screenings for heart disease risk factors—often in just one visit. Since 2000, WISEWOMAN has

- Reached over 45,000 women in need.
- Provided over 60,000 health screenings and nearly 120,000 lifestyle intervention sessions to women.
- Identified 4,798 new cases of high blood pressure, 5,223 new cases of high cholesterol, and 775 new cases of high blood sugar.

### **Resources**

A good overview of the WISEWOMAN program and our findings thus far can be found in the *Journal of Women's Health*, Vol. 13, No. 5, 2004. For more details about WISEWOMAN's successes, other published references, and information to support this document, please visit our Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/wisewoman>.



## Meet Jacqueline

### Small diet changes, big results

"I've been trying to lower my blood sugar for years," says Jacqueline Noyes, 60, of Sutton, Vermont. It wasn't until she began nutrition counseling with Ladies First, a WISEWOMAN program, that she was really able to do it. She's done so well, she got a personal letter from her doctor congratulating her for such a good job.

"I really am pleased with the nutritionist. If I hadn't been for him, I wouldn't have lowered my blood sugar." Jacqueline's doctor was the first to tell her about the new Ladies First nutrition program. She found it easier than she thought it would be to make some key diet changes, like eating more oatmeal, wheat bread, 1% milk, fruit, and beans. "They fill me up, so I don't have to eat as much anymore," she says.

She recommends the program to anyone. "It's not drastic. You make little changes here and there," she says. And she's proof those little changes can make a big difference.

*Reprinted with permission*

*Ladies First, a WISEWOMAN program*

*Vermont Department of Health*

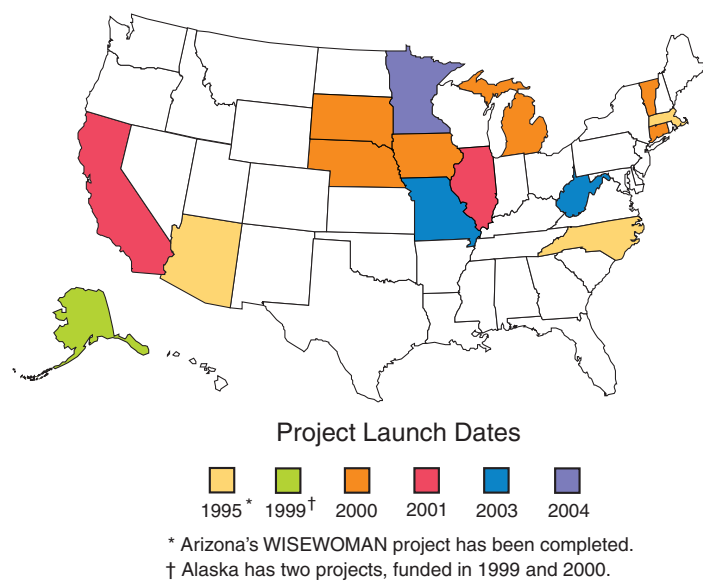
*Burlington, Vermont*

## A good value with vast opportunities

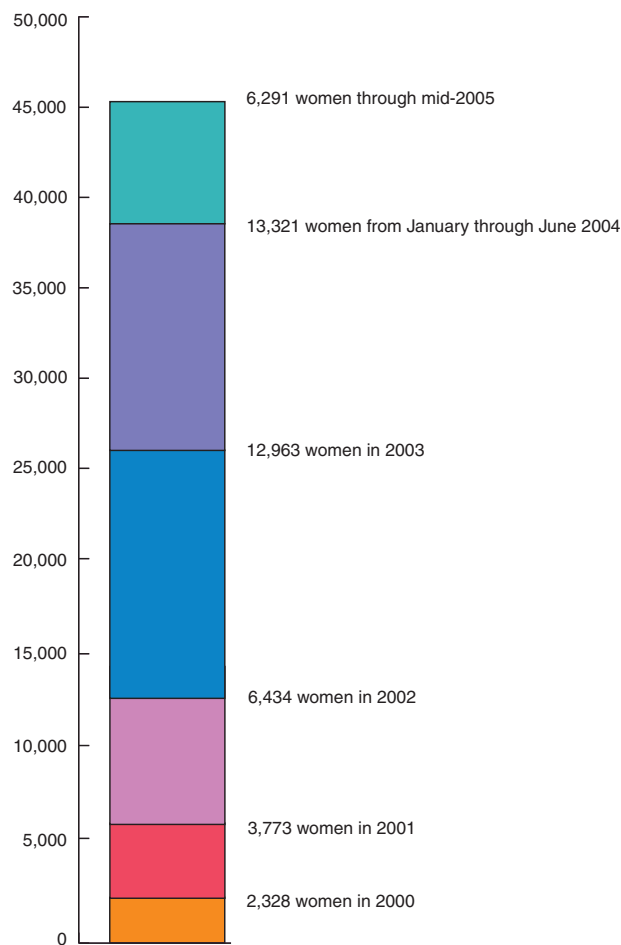
- WISEWOMAN offers opportunities for a healthy life to women who are usually left behind and who are at high risk for serious health problems.
- WISEWOMAN costs about \$400 per participant, but the potential benefits are worth much more.
- WISEWOMAN's holistic approach has helped thousands of women become more active, eat healthier, and lower their risk of developing heart disease.
- WISEWOMAN has shown impressive growth and ability to sustain, with the support of partners at the grassroots level.
- The one-stop-shopping concept of WISEWOMAN is a model for building other health programs that want to offer more comprehensive health services by piggy-backing onto an existing program.
- WISEWOMAN is helping America reach its *Healthy People 2010* goals for reducing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, and other serious health problems.

WISEWOMAN started as a demonstration program in 3 states in 1995. Today, it includes 15 projects in 14 states.

**WISEWOMAN s success is spreading**

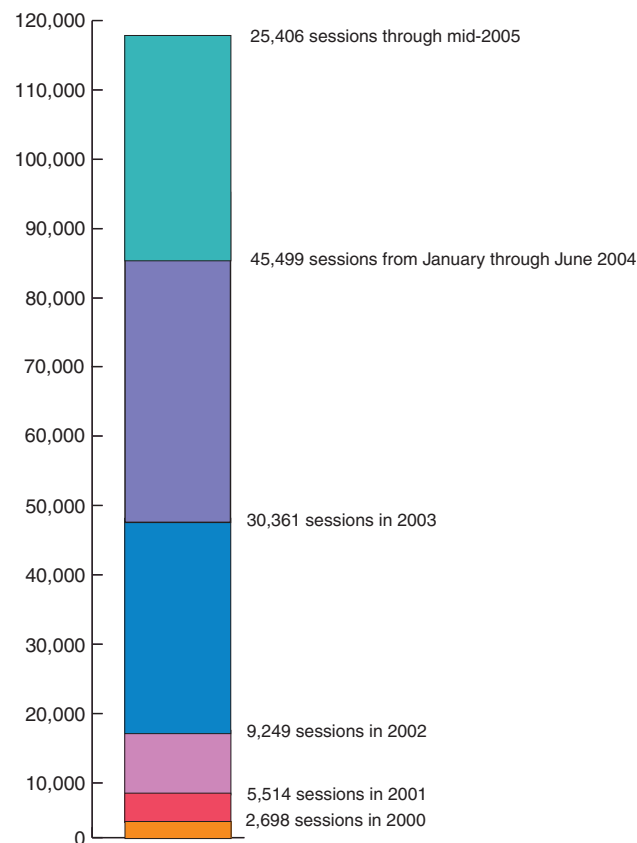


**Cumulative Number of Newly Screened Women**



Source: Research Triangle Institute, Minimum Data Element Database, 2000 through June 2005.

**Cumulative Number of WISEWOMAN Intervention Sessions Attended**



Source: Research Triangle Institute, Minimum Data Element Database, 2000 through June 2005.



# Here's what legislators have to say about the WISEWOMAN Program

“As the brother of two sisters lost to breast cancer and the father of two daughters, I know firsthand the importance of making women’s health initiatives a top priority. The first step to fighting a chronic disease like cancer, heart disease, or osteoporosis is early detection. All women deserve to benefit from the early detection and prevention made possible by the latest advances in medicine. This bill [the WISEWOMAN Expansion Act] ensures a place for low-income women at the health care table.” \*

“WISEWOMAN is instrumental in providing health screenings to women. The benefits of this program are paramount — it can and does save lives. Making women aware of health risks will undoubtedly benefit public health by saving dollars and lives in the long run.” †

“Expanding the WISEWOMAN program to provide preventive health services for women in all 50 states will help save the lives of many more women across the country.” §

\* U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), May 24, 2000

† U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), July 17, 2003

§ U.S. Sen. Bill Frist, MD (R-TN), September 5, 2002

